



ASTUR NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ.
White Variety?

ASTUR NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ, *Vig. and Horsf., Albino.*

White Goshawk.

Lacteous Eagle, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. i. p. 216.

Astur Novæ-Hollandiæ, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 179.—Gould in Syn. of Birds of Australia, Part III.

Astur albus, Jard. and Selb. Ill. Orn., vol. i. pl. 1.

Falco Novæ-Hollandiæ, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 16.—Gmel. Syst. Nat., vol. i. p. 264.—Daud., vol. ii. p. 56.

Falco albus, Shaw in White's Voy., pl. in p. 260.—Ib. Gen. Zool., vol. vii. p. 92.

New Holland White Eagle, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. i. p. 40.—Ib. Supp., p. 12.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. i. p. 217.—White's Voy., pl. in p. 260.

Goo-loo-bee, Aborigines of New South Wales, *Latham*.

White Hawk, of the Colonists.

ALTHOUGH I feel convinced that the white bird to which the name of *Falco Novæ-Hollandiæ* has been constantly applied by the older writers is merely an albino of the species figured on the preceding plate, I have been induced to give a representation of it here, in order to show what synonyms have reference to that state of plumage, as well as to depict one of the most ornamental and beautiful of the *Falconidæ* inhabiting Australia. As I have before stated, the range of the grey bird would seem to be confined to New South Wales : on the other hand, the white bird is not only found in the same districts, but is also very generally, though sparingly, distributed over Van Diemen's Land, a fact which might induce many persons to consider it to be a distinct species ; I am however inclined, with Cuvier, to believe it to be merely an albino variety, now become permanent,—an event of very rare occurrence among animals in a state of nature. The diversity in the colouring of the irides of the many individuals that have come under my notice would materially tend to confirm this opinion, some having the irides bright yellow, and others brown ; a splendid female I shot under Mount Wellington in Van Diemen's Land had the irides bright crimson, like those of the albinos of many other animals ; while another equally fine female, in the possession of the Hon. Henry Elliot, at Government House, had the irides bright yellow.

In the size and admeasurements of the various parts of either sex of the white and grey birds no difference whatever can be detected, another reason for believing them to be the same ; for wherever a specific difference is found to exist, it is always accompanied by a difference in the dimensions of the whole or parts of the structure.

A knowledge of the nidification of this and the preceding bird, and of the state of their plumage from youth to maturity, would greatly tend to settle the question of their identity.

The disposition of Mr. Elliot's bird was fierce and wild in the extreme, exhibiting none of the docility of the true Falcons, but displaying all the ferocity so characteristic of the group to which it belongs.

The sexes differ very considerably in size, the male being scarcely more than half the size of the female.

The whole of the plumage pure white ; cere and legs yellow ; bill and claws black.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.